

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AID-05 EB-07 AGR-10 CIAE-00 INR-07

NSAE-00 OMB-01 TRSE-00 /041 W
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FM AMEMBASSY PORT OF SPAIN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7909

INFO AMEMBASSY BRIDGETOWN

AMCONSUL CURACAO

AMEMBASSY KINGSTON

AMEMBASSY PORT AU PRINCE

AMEMBASSY SANTO DOMINGO

UNCLAS PORT OF SPAIN 1450

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EAGR TGEN TD

SUBJECT: DROUGHT CONDITIONS

ALSO FOR AID

REF: STATE 127148

1. FOLLOWING APPLIES TO TRINIDAD ONLY, SINCE TOBAGO IS A RELATIVELY UNIMPORTANT FOOD PRODUCER. PATTERN OF RAINFALL IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN TOTAL AMOUNT. FOR EXAMPLE, MORE RAIN FELL ON TRINIDAD IN 1973 THAN PREVIOUS YEAR BUT SHARP DROP IN AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION WAS DUE TO EXTENDED DRY SEASON WITH MOST RAIN COMING LAST THREE MONTHS OF 1973. WHILE LESS RAIN FELL IN 1974, PATTERN OVER THE YEAR WAS SUCH THAT MOST CROP PRODUCTION IMPROVED.

2. TRINIDAD PRECIPITATION DATA RE DIVIDED INTO EASTERN AREA (EA) OF 14 STATIONS AND DRIER WESTERN AREA (WA) OF 16 STATIONS. EA INCLUDES MOST CROPS AND ALL SUGAR CANE WHILE WA INCLUDES SOME COFFEE, COCOA, RICH AND VEGETABLE PRODUCTION. THIRTY-FOUR-YEAR MEAN ANNUAL RAINFALL IN EA IS 100.8 INCHES COMPARED WITH 71.45 INCHES IN WA. LAST UNCLASSIFIED

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SEVERAL YEARS HAVE BEEN BELOW THESE FIGURES. 1974 EA

WAS 80.57 INCHES AND WA WAS 51.72 INCHES.

3. FIRST 3 MONTHS OF 1975 RAINFALL EA 9.19 INCHES AND
WA 4.25 INCHES COMPARED WITH 1974 EA 15.02 INCHES AND
WA 8.32 INCHES INDICATE ANOTHER DRY YEAR IN THE MAKING.
DELAYED START OF RAINY SEASON COULD ADVERSELY AFFECT
AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION, BUT IT IS TOO EARLY TO QUANTIFY.

4. TRINIDAD'S FOOD IMPORTS ROSE SHARPLY TO \$125 MILLION
IN 1974 (COMPARED WITH \$77 MILLION IN 1973) DUE PARTLY TO
DROUGHT-INDUCED DECREASED DOMESTIC FOOD PRODUCTION AND
PARTLY TO HIGHER WORLD PRICES. TOTAL FOOD IMPORTS WILL
PROBABLY INCREASE FURTHER IN 1975, BUT SHOULD NOT BE A
HEAVY BURDEN ON THE ECONOMY DUE TO TRINIDAD'S STRONG
FOREIGN RESERVE POSITION.

RICH

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